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ABSTRACT

Two sets of analyses were done to examine the "holding power" of ninth grade courses. The first looked at the courses taken by high-risk students who were in the ninth grade in 1978-79. The second set of analyses looked at the courses taken by high-risk students from a dropout study who were in the ninth grade in 1979-80. Only three courses were significantly related to staying in school or dropping out in both analyses. Varsity sports and photography were positively related to staying in school and enrollment in study hall was related to dropping out. The relationships described are unlikely to have occurred by chance, but the causes behind them remain obscure. (BW)

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HOLDING POWER OF NINTH-GRADE COURSES

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HOLDING POWER OF NINTH-GRADE COURSES

Using the data file created as part of the Dropout Study, it is possible to identify high-risk students who do and do not drop out of school. An examination of the courses taken by these students in the ninth grade may provide information about the relationship between course selection and dropping out. If there are courses with greater than expected concentrations of high-risk students who did not drop out, then one might argue that those classes had a strong holding power for high-risk students. Or one could argue that high-risk students who select those courses differ in some unmeasured way from high-risk students who drop out.

Conversely, courses with greater than expected concentrations of high-risk students who drop out may attract those who ultimately drop out, or they may in some way promote dropping out.

Two sets of analyses were done to examine the "holding power" of ninth grade courses. The first looked at the courses taken by high-risk students who were in the ninth grade in 1978-79. These were students who were at the expected grade for their age. The second set of analyses looked at the courses taken by high-risk students from the dropout study who were in the ninth grade in 1979-80. These students were one grade below that expected for their age.

The attached tables describe the relationship between groups of courses and dropping out for the high-risk students. Enrollment in some courses is related to dropping out. Enrollment in others is related to staying in, and enrollment in others is neutral. The relationships described are unlikely to have occurred by chance, but the causes behind them remain obscure. It may be productive, however, to explore these results in order to better understand what happens to our high-risk students in high school.

An examination of the results raises questions such as the following:

1. Are we encouraging students to drop out by assigning them to remedial classes such as FOM where they receive the same instruction over and over?
2. Are we providing students with valuable training in areas such as electricity/electronics and graphic arts which enable them to quit school and find a good job?
3. Does calling attention to high-risk students as might occur in speech and drama encourage them to leave school?
4. If high risk-students take band, are their chances of dropping out increased?

Only three courses were significantly related to staying in school or dropping out in both analyses. Varsity sports and photography were positively related to staying in school and enrollment in study hall was related to dropping out.

Technical Note

The high-risk students used in these analyses were identified from the file used in the Dropout Study completed in 1982-83. Documentation on the creation of the School Leaver File can be found in Appendix E of publication number 81.73 and Appendix H of publication number 82.55. High-risk students were identified using the classification function coefficients reported for all students in publication number 82.55. Students were classified as high risk if their dropout discriminant function value was greater than their stay-in function value. The appropriate Student Grade Report files were used to determine which courses the students took when in the ninth grade. Courses were grouped at the level of the hundred's place in their identification numbers. All courses were taken under the quarter system. A probability level of .1 was used in creating the tables.

SUBJECT AREA	COURSE GROUPS PREDICTIVE OF... DROPPING OUT	NEUTRAL	STAYING IN
Business (0-699)		General Business Bookkeeping Business Machines	Typing
Language Arts (1000-1899)	Speech Drama	Grammar Composition Literature Reading Creative Writing Journalism	
Foreign Language (2000-2499)	French Spanish for Native Speakers	German Latin	Spanish
Homemaking (2500-2999)	Food	Clothing Family Living CVAE Food Service	
Mathematics (3000-3499)	Fundamentals of Math		Introductory Algebra Algebra Geometry
Science (4000-4299)		Physical Science Biology Earth Science	
Social Studies (4500-4699)		World Geography	World History
Art (5000-5199)		Art Crafts	
Music (5300-5899)	Band	Orchestra Brass Ensemble Chorus Music History Guitar-Piano	

Figure 1: "HOLDING POWER" OF NINTH-GRADE COURSES FOR HIGH-RISK STUDENTS IN NINTH GRADE IN 1978-79*

SUBJECT AREA	COURSE GROUPS PREDICTIVE OF... DROPPING OUT	NEUTRAL	STAYING IN
Physical Education (6000-6999)	Basketball, Football, and Softball	Physical Conditioning Soccer Wrestling/Gymnastics Badminton, Golf, Tennis Recreational Sports Health	Dance Varsity Sports
Industrial Arts (7000-7999)	Electricity/Electronics Graphic Arts	Bicycle Repair Industrial Crafts Drafting Metalworking Plastics Power Technology Woodworking	Photography
Special Education (9500-9999)		Industrial Arts & Crafts	Language Arts Social Studies Math Homemaking and Pre-Vocational Study
Miscellaneous (8000-9499)	DE Pre-Employment Lab CVAE General Construction/ General Mechanical Repair Study Hall	Vocational Agriculture ROTC Driver Education Aerospace Special Assignment	CVAE Office Duplication

Figure 1. "HOLDING POWER" OF NINTH-GRADE COURSES FOR HIGH-RISK STUDENTS IN NINTH GRADE IN 1978-79*

*These students were on grade level for age.

SUBJECT AREA	COURSE GROUPS PREDICTIVE OF... DROPPING OUT	NEUTRAL	STAYING IN
Business Education (0-699)		General Business Typewriting Business Machines	
Language Arts (1000-1899)		Grammar Composition Literature Reading Speech Drama Journalism Media Communication	
Foreign Language (2000-2499)		German Spanish	Spanish for Native Speakers
Homemaking (2500-2999)		Food Management Clothing/Housing Family Living CVAE Food Service/ Child care	
Mathematics (3000-3499)		Fundamentals of Math Introductory Algebra Algebra	
Science (4000-4299)	Earth Science Chemistry	Physical Science	Biology
Social Studies (4500-4699)		World Geography World History Government	
Art (5000-5199)		Pottery	Drawing/Painting

Figure 2. "HOLDING POWER" OF NINTH-GRADE COURSES FOR HIGH-RISK STUDENTS IN NINTH GRADE IN 1979-80*

SUBJECT AREA	COURSE GROUPS PREDICTIVE OF... DROPPING OUT	NEUTRAL	STAYING IN
Music (5300-5899)		Band Orchestra Chorus Guitar	
Physical Education (6000-6999)		Physical Conditioning Basketball, Football, Softball Soccer Wrestling, Gymnastics Badminton, Golf, Tennis Dance Recreational Sports	Varsity Sports
Industrial Arts (7000-7999)	Industrial Crafts Plastics	Bicycle Repair Drafting Electricity/Electronics Metal Working Woodworking	Photography
Special Education (9500-9999)		Special Language Arts Special Social Studies Special Industrial Arts and Crafts Special Math Special Homemaking and Pre-Vocational Study	
Miscellaneous (8000-9499)	ROTC Study Hall and Library Skills	CVAE Office Duplication CVAE/General Mechanical Repair Vocational Agriculture Driver Education	

Figure 2. "HOLDING POWER" OF NINTH-GRADE COURSES FOR HIGH-RISK STUDENTS IN NINTH GRADE IN 1979-80*

*These students were behind in grade for age.

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